

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 03259 301358Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 MCT-01 /071 W
-----012916 301413Z /45

R 301308Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1110
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, KU
SUBJECT: KUWAIT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROTEST LACK OF
STUDENT RIGHTS

REF: KUWAIT 558 (NOTAL)

1. MANY KUWAIT UNIVERSITY (KU) STUDENTS SKIPPED CLASSES
MAY 29, IN PEACEFUL PROTEST OF A UNIVERSITY BAN ON THE
ON-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES OF STUDENT POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS. THE
BAN HAD BEEN PUT INTO EFFECT LAST JANUARY WHEN TWO
BAHRAINI STUDENT GROUPS CLASHED (REFTEL). THE PROTEST TOOK
THE FORM OF A MARCH BY STUDENTS, REPORTEDLY NUMBERING UNDER
A THOUSAND AND ESCORTED BY POLICE CARS, FROM THE AUDALIYA
CAMPUS TO THE KHALDIA CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY, WHERE A
DELEGATION FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE KU STUDENTS UNION THEN
CALLED ON THE ACTING RECTOR AND OTHER ADMINISTRATION
OFFICIALS. THE DELEGATION REQUESTED THE OFFICIALS TO LIFT
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THE BAN. CONCURRENTLY, MORE STUDENTS JOINED THE
GROUP, WHICH MET IN THE KHALDIA AUDITORIUM TO HEAR STUDENT
SPEECHES DEMANDING RESTORATION OF STUDENT RIGHTS AND
DECRYING ADMINISTRATION PATERNALISM. AFTER AN HOUR OR SO
OF SPEECHES, THE AIR CONDITIONING WAS TURNED OFF AND THE
MEETING MOVED OUTSIDE FOR FURTHER SPEECHES. IT REPORTEDLY
BROKE UP PEACEFULLY, THOUGH SOME SPEAKERS ASSERTED THAT

THEY WOULD NOT OBSERVE THE BAN.

2. THE KU ADMINISTRATION IS REPORTED TO HAVE PROMISED TO MEET WITH STUDENT LEADERS AGAIN MAY 31, HEAR FURTHER GRIEVANCES AND SUBMIT THE QUESTION OF THE BAN FOR REVIEW BY THE KU COUNCIL NEXT WEEK.

3. COMMENT: WITH THE APPROACH OF THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND THE PROBABLE ASTUTE RESPONSE OF THE KU ADMINISTRATION TO STUDENT DEMANDS, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT MUCH TO COME OF THE CURRENT PROTEST -- THE BAN MAY WELL BE LIFTED. HOWEVER, FINAL EXAM TIME IS ALWAYS TENSE AND THERE HAS BEEN SOME GRUMBLING LATELY ABOUT THE "AMERICANIZATION" OF UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES, BOTH ON AND OFF THE CAMPUS. FURTHER PUBLIC MANIFESTATION OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS MAY OCCUR.

SUTHERLAND

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Message Attributes

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